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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
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10/590,949

11/08/2006

Franz Neuhofer JR.

NEUHOFFER, JR.-15 PCT

3758

25889 7590 02/24/2010  
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EXAMINER

KATCHEVES, BASIL S

ART UNIT

PAPER NUMBER

3635

MAIL DATE

DELIVERY MODE

02/24/2010

PAPER

**Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.**

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.



<b>Office Action Summary</b>	<b>Application No.</b> 10/590,949	<b>Applicant(s)</b> NEUHOFER, FRANZ	
	<b>Examiner</b> BASIL KATCHEVES	<b>Art Unit</b> 3635	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

#### Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

#### Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 28 August 2006.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**.                      2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

#### Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-12 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) 7-12 is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-6 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

#### Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on \_\_\_\_\_ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.  
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).  
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

#### Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☒ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☒ All    b) ☐ Some \*    c) ☐ None of:
1. ☒ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. \_\_\_\_\_.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

\* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

#### Attachment(s)

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| 1) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)  | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413)<br>Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)  | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application                       |
| 3) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08)<br>Paper No(s)/Mail Date <u>8/28/06</u> . | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____  |



## **DETAILED ACTION**

### ***Election/Restrictions***

Claims 7-12 are withdrawn from further consideration pursuant to 37 CFR 1.142(b), as being drawn to a nonelected method, there being no allowable generic or linking claim. A phone conversation with Mr. Dorchak confirmed an election with traverse on the grounds there is no extra burden of search. This is not convincing since the method includes cutting and forming found in a different class. Claims 1-6 are examined below.

### ***Double Patenting***

The nonstatutory double patenting rejection is based on a judicially created doctrine grounded in public policy (a policy reflected in the statute) so as to prevent the unjustified or improper timewise extension of the “right to exclude” granted by a patent and to prevent possible harassment by multiple assignees. A nonstatutory obviousness-type double patenting rejection is appropriate where the conflicting claims are not identical, but at least one examined application claim is not patentably distinct from the reference claim(s) because the examined application claim is either anticipated by, or would have been obvious over, the reference claim(s). See, e.g., *In re Berg*, 140 F.3d 1428, 46 USPQ2d 1226 (Fed. Cir. 1998); *In re Goodman*, 11 F.3d 1046, 29 USPQ2d 2010 (Fed. Cir. 1993); *In re Longi*, 759 F.2d 887, 225 USPQ 645 (Fed. Cir. 1985); *In re Van Ornum*, 686 F.2d 937, 214 USPQ 761 (CCPA 1982); *In re Vogel*, 422 F.2d 438, 164 USPQ 619 (CCPA 1970); and *In re Thorington*, 418 F.2d 528, 163 USPQ 644 (CCPA 1969).

A timely filed terminal disclaimer in compliance with 37 CFR 1.321(c) or 1.321(d) may be used to overcome an actual or provisional rejection based on a nonstatutory double patenting ground provided the conflicting application or patent either is shown to be commonly owned with this application, or claims an invention made as a result of activities undertaken within the scope of a joint research agreement.

Effective January 1, 1994, a registered attorney or agent of record may sign a terminal disclaimer. A terminal disclaimer signed by the assignee must fully comply with 37 CFR 3.73(b).

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Effective January 1, 1994, a registered attorney or agent of record may sign a terminal disclaimer. A terminal disclaimer signed by the assignee must fully comply with 37 CFR 3.73(b).

Claims 1 and 2 are provisionally rejected on the ground of nonstatutory obviousness-type double patenting as being unpatentable over copending Application No. 10/590951. Although the conflicting claims are not identical, they are not patentably distinct from each other.

This is a provisional obviousness-type double patenting rejection because the conflicting claims have not in fact been patented.

Claims 1 and 2 are substantially similar to claims 9 and 3 of '951.

### ***Claim Objections***

Claim 1 is objected for being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention. The claim is drawn to a device for bridging appearing to be a subcombination but then claims two



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floor boards appearing to be a combination flooring and bridging device. Clarification is required, the claims will be examined as the combination.

***Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112***

The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.

Claim 1 recites the limitation "the lower" in line 8. There is insufficient antecedent basis for this limitation in the claim.

Claim 4 recites "the widened" in line 2.

***Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102***

The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

**Claims 1-4 rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S.**

**Patent No. 3,667,177 to Biela.**

Regarding claim 1, Biela discloses a bridging device (fig. 10:88) bridging between a higher and lower flooring (60, 92), that extends over both floor surfaces and has a clamping extension 64 that protrudes downward and is engaged to a fixture by means of clamping (38, 36) and having a compensating strip 96 between flange 48 and lower floor 92, wherein the fixture has a clamping seat 37 for the strip 96.



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Regarding claim 2, Biela discloses two resilient retaining legs (38, 36) protruding upward and receiving the clamping extension with the mounting plate 39 extending beyond the legs on the lower side of the floor and bearing a clamping seat 37 for the compensating strip 96.

Regarding claim 3, Biela discloses the clamping seat as consisting of one retaining leg (end of 37) engaging a longitudinal groove in the compensating strip 96.

Regarding claim 4, Biela discloses an inherent ability to separate portions of the plate.

### ***Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103***

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

**Claims 5 and 6 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 3,667,177 to Biela.**

Regarding claims 5 and 6, Biela does not disclose the covering flange 54 as abutting, or contacting, the compensating strip. However, it would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to change the shape of the end flange 54 in Biela to extend to the compensating strip because a change in shape is within the level of ordinary skill in the art absent persuasive evidence that the particular configuration is significant (see MPEP 2144.04 (IV) (B)). A simple



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extension of the end piece 54 would create a better seal from moisture since the surface area of the end piece 54 would be greater. This would have been an obvious design change in the shape of this component. This would also put an inherent tension upon the compensating strip aiding in sealing off any moisture.

***Conclusion***

The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure.

The cited patents listed on the included form PTO-892 further show the state of the art with respect to bridging strips in general.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Basil Katcheves whose telephone number is (571) 272-6846. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday-Friday from 7:30 am to 4:00 pm.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Richard Chilcot, can be reached at (571) 272-6777.

/Basil Katcheves/

Primary Examiner, Art Unit 3635